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## SOCIALISM: ITS FALLACIES AND DANGERS.

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THERE are so many grades and shades of diverse opinion loosely included in and attacked or defended as Socialism, that it is necessary to briefly make clear what it is that I attack in this paper. I understand and define Socialism as denying all individual private property, and as affirming that society, organized as the State, should own all wealth, direct all labor, and compel the equal distribution of all produce. I understand a socialistic State to be that State in which everything would be common as to its user, and in which all labor would be controlled by the State, which, from the common stock, would maintain the laborer and would take all the produce of the labor. That is, I identify Socialism with Communism.

In England this definition, though admitted by some Socialist writers and speakers, is challenged by many honest, earnest Socialists, whose objections are entitled to respect; but, the more carefully I examine their several positions, the more thoroughly I am disposed to adhere to the above definition. Many who describe themselves as Socialists I should describe as social reformers, and with them I have little or no quarrel. There are some who attempt to explain Socialism so as to distinguish it from Communism. "Socialism," says Mr. Besant, "merely implies that the raw material of the soil and the means of production shall not be the private property of individuals, but shall be under the control of the community; it leaves intact a man's control over himself and over the value of his work—subject to such general laws as are necessary in any community—but, by socializing land and capital, it deprives each of the power of enslaving his fellows and of living in idleness on the results of their labor instead of on the result of his own" (*Modern Socialism*, p. 10). A great deal in this sentence turns on what is meant by "means of production." Does it, at the same time, include the

rudest implement, the huge iron works and plant, and the most minute, delicate, and costly tools? Does it mean that in everyday life each citizen has equal right to require the State to place at her or his sole disposal, uncontrolled, and for such period as the worker may please, such "raw material" and "means of production" as the worker is of opinion are necessary to enable him to get the best value for his labor? If yes, where is the control of the means of production by the community? If no, how can the scheme leave intact a man's control over himself, and over the value of his work? How is the willful damage or the deterioration of the means of production, by an incapable worker, to be guarded against? How is the abandonment of a difficult industry to be prevented? How are the instruments of production to be obtained by the laborer, and on what conditions, and under what security that they will be surrendered to, and kept in good condition for, the State? and if three laborers require instruments of production of a kind of which there only exists sufficient for two laborers, what is to happen? How is the State, in furnishing the raw material and means of production, to determine between a man who thinks he can manufacture a medicine; one who believes that he can make a watch; one who hopes that he can execute a marble statue; one who is confident that he can make a microscope; one who is sure that he can build an aerial ship; one who guesses that he can find coal in an untried district; and one who thinks that he can fill a tub of coal or wagon of ironstone by means of a shaft already sunken? Is the determination to be made by authorities locally chosen to act in such localities or nationally chosen to act for the whole country? and how will it be possible to avoid favoritism between hard and easy fashions of labor? If the State leaves intact a man's control over himself, this determination is impossible.

Whoever, on behalf of the State, is guardian of the raw material and means of production, must either in each case determine the kind of labor for which the man or woman is best fitted, or he must allot, first come first served, without reference to fitness. If all raw material is to be the property of the State, may the person who has, in the process of manufacture, added value to some portion, take the whole of that portion away to a foreign market where he believes the highest value will be obtainable for it and for his work upon it? If yes, how is the State to be sure that the

value of its raw material will ever come back ? If the State is to control the sale of the finished article, where is the worker's intact control of the value of his work ? Mr. Hyndman says : " Socialism is an endeavor to substitute for the anarchical struggle or fight for existence, an organized co-operation for existence."\* I note on this, that while the struggle for existence has been clearly far too bitter, not only as between employer and employed, but also as between the workers themselves, and has certainly been most oppressive on the poorest and weakest, " anarchical " is an absurd word of description, and that the vitality of the whole definition depends on the translation of the words " organized co-operation." Voluntary co-operation is organized co-operation determinable by the will of each co-operator, as far as he or she is concerned, and subject to the conditions agreed to as to such withdrawal, but this clearly is not what is meant by Mr. Hyndman. When in debate I pressed for explanation, it was refused, and Mr. J. L. Joynes, a prominent Socialist and one of the best educated among them, wrote in rebuke of my demand that " no ' scientific ' Socialist pretends to have any scheme or detailed plan of organization." They only pretend to desire to destroy existing society because of its evils ; to-morrow may grow, if and how it can, without the slightest precaution against the development of a worse state. What Mr. Hyndman meant by anarchy he thus explained : " There is many a man who works as a skilled laborer to-day, who if a machine is invented whereby man may benefit, will be turned out to compete against his fellows on the streets to-morrow. That is what I say is anarchy." And as the cure for this he asked for " the collective ownership of land, capital, machinery, and credit by the complete ownership of the people." As to labor-saving machinery, or cost-reducing machinery, or produce-increasing machinery, it is true that as each new invention is introduced, the introduction very often renders it necessary that persons who have pursued one method of earning their livelihood shall adopt new methods and there is often difficulty in finding new employment. If the worker is advanced in life, it is very difficult for him to adapt himself to other labor. But it is not true that the introduction of machinery has permanently reduced the number of workers in the country where most machinery is used, nor is it true that the rate

\* All the quotations from Mr. Hyndman are from the debate with myself : " Will Socialism benefit the English People ? "

of pauperism has, on the whole, increased in the countries where the most machinery has been introduced. Mr. Hyndman's definition means communism or it means nothing. If the collective ownership of everything by everybody is not the total negation of private property, then words have no value.

Many so-called socialistic experiments have been tried in various parts of the world, but none of these have yet been permanently successful. Such as have seemed temporarily to achieve a certain measure of success have been held together : (1) By some religious or quasi-religious tie, and those have in turn broken up when the effect of the tie has weakened ; or (2) by personal devotion to some one man, and these have broken up when the man has died or grown weary ; or (3) while directed by some strong chief or chiefs, and holding together only so long as the direction endured. And even the temporary success has only been maintained whilst the community were few in number. Whenever an apparent success tempted many recruits, then the experiment collapsed, and this because, whilst the members in the community were limited, the individual members of the community did not lose sight of the personal advantages accruing from their individual exertions. Each small community held its own property hostile to, or, at least, clearly distinguishable from, the property of other individuals, or communities, dwelling near. Every individual of the so-called socialistic community could estimate the addition to the common stock, the owners of which were so limited in number that he could calculate his share of the increased wealth. The incentive to increased exertion was constant in the hope of increased well-being, and in some of the communities the individual members had and often exercised an option of withdrawal, taking away with them on leaving a proportion of the property created or increased. But none of the communistic experiments, either in the United States or in this country, have been more than large co-operative enterprises, the property of the adventurers belonging to the corporate body. And there is little doubt that these experiments have done something to produce—as in the case of the Familistère of M. Godin—some modifications of the more unpleasant side of the fiercely competitive struggle for existence, and that they did pave the way, at any rate in England, for the co-operative institutions, which for exchange and distribution have already been eminently successful. And though co-operative enterprises for produc-

tion have yet done comparatively little, it is in this direction that I look for the utilization of the best in modern socialistic energy.

Modern Socialism is more ambitious of exercising State authority, and is therefore more dangerous than was the socialism of fifty years ago. The socialism of Owen, Cabet and Frances Wright was the experiment, in each case of a few, in their own persons, at their own risk and cost, patiently conducted, and, even in failure, giving example of great devotion and much self-reliant effort. Modern Socialists claim to experiment with the State as a whole, and without waiting even to convert the majority. Modern Socialism appeals to the poorest and most hungry to break up all accumulated wealth. It works chiefly by denunciations of the rich and well fed. It has no patience to gradually build up a new system; it regards reform as its enemy; it proposes to begin by destroying the existing state of things. Unfortunately, the social evils in all old countries are great and sore, but if they are to be diminished they must be reformed in detail; there is no magic four-leaved shamrock at the disposal of the reformer. The worst and most mischievous advocates of Socialism are those who justify and encourage the unemployed in the use of force—and especially of the terrible phase of force revealed by modern chemistry, as an agent in changing the present state of society. In some countries Socialists call themselves "Anarchists," repudiating alike all law, rejecting all directing government; in other countries they call themselves "Social Democrats," and call upon the State to feed, clothe, and employ those who are ill fed, badly clothed, or lack employment. These Socialists are the real enemies of progress, they afford excuse to those who desire reaction. The State can give the people neither food, nor clothing, nor work, save to the extent, and as the citizens themselves, provide the State with the means to do these things. If the State is to do for each individual that which the individual is unable to do for himself, then if it be done at all it can only be done by a despotism. State Socialism is utterly at variance with individual liberty; it is totally hostile to the institutions of a free democracy.

Great publicity has been recently obtained in England, and chiefly in London, for a comparatively small knot of men, styling themselves "Social Democrats," and also describing themselves as "Scientific Socialists," some of whom give us ill-digested versions of German Socialism. They have, like the Salvation Army,

been chiefly prominent in holding meetings, to the detriment of traffic, in inconvenient places, whilst convenient places were disregarded by them. By these means they have brought on their heads several police prosecutions, which prosecutions had the color of unfairness as being directed against hysteric Socialism, while hysteric Salvation-armyism escaped scot free. They have also succeeded in provoking a criminal prosecution by the use of language which, if it had any meaning, was in the highest degree inflammatory and exciting, but which language was held not to be connected with or intended to provoke the riotous results which followed its use. These men have, however, neither the influence nor the devotedness of the men who preached and practiced experimental Socialism under Robert Owen from 1817, and who, fifty years ago, were stirring the whole of the midland and northern counties of England, holding great meetings and establishing scores of halls and institutions in the northern towns. The new Social Democrats, while calling loudly for the dissolution of the present social state, denied that they ought to be called upon to produce or formulate any scheme for the government of the society which is to follow the revolution they acclaim, and they refuse to discuss any of the details of life in the proposed new social state; though they profess at once to be ready by force, argument failing, to destroy what exists in order to make way for what they desire. Mr. Hyndman, professing to be a leader of the Social Democrats, declares that "force, or fear of force, is unfortunately the only reasoning which can appeal to a dominant estate, or which will even induce them to surrender any portion of their property." A socialist State, if it could be realized by force, which I do not believe, could only so be realized after a shocking and murderous civil war; a war which, however it ended, would leave, for more than one generation, legacies of bitter hate and of demoralizing desire for revenge.

The Social Democrats mix up in their programme some desirable objects which are not at all socialistic, with others that are not necessarily socialistic. They then add declarations conflicting in character, which are either so vague as to be meaningless, or are else, in the highest degree, communistic and revolutionary. They call for the "organization of agricultural and industrial armies under State control" and claim "that the exchange of all production should be controlled by the workers," but they decline

to explain how this is to be done, or to meet detail objections urged against the feasibility of the proposals. All labor under State control means the utter stagnation of special industrial effort ; the neutralization of almost all industrial enterprise ; the stoppage of the most efficient incentive to inventive initiative. What can the organization and control of all labor by the State mean ? In what would it end ? By whom and in what manner would the selection of each individual be determined for the pursuit, profession, or handicraft for which he was deemed fittest ? Would resistance or refusal on the part of any individual to perform the labor for which he had been selected be treated as crime ? Would preference for any other kind of labor than that allotted be allowed ? I am told that thus I am raising undue difficulties, but I want at least to know how the new State machine will work before I consent to suddenly break up the old one. That there are many evils in connection with exchange and distribution is true. In many departments there are too many concerned in the distribution of the necessities of life, as brokers, merchants, and retailers, and the cost to the consumer is thus unnecessarily and outrageously augmented. But this can be cured by the gradual extension of the co-operative distributive institutions and stores which have already proved so useful. These co-operative societies, whilst rendering the cost of exchange less onerous and otherwise improving its character, also encourage habits of thrift and self-reliant effort on the part of the individual members. In a socialistic state there would be no inducement to thrift ; no encouragement to, no reward for, individual saving ; no protection for individual accumulation ; no check upon, no discouragement to individual waste. If the establishment of a socialistic State be conceived possible, it is certainly not possible to imagine such a State co-existing with free expression of individual opinion, either on platform or through the press. All means of publicity in a socialistic State will belong to and will be controlled by the State. It is not conceivable that a socialistic government would provide halls for its adversaries to agitate for its overthrow, print books and pamphlets for its opponents to show that its methods and actions were mischievous ; organize costly journals and give the conduct to hostile men to excite public feeling—and yet if all this were not done, utter stagnation of opinion is the only possible result. The “Social Democrats” urge that the “surplus value” of labor is “the keystone of the



socialistic argument." They say, "the laborers on the average replace the value of their wages for the capitalist class in the first few hours of their day's work; the exchange value of the goods produced in the remaining hours of the day's work constitutes so much embodied labor which is unpaid; and this unpaid labor, so embodied in articles of utility, the capitalist class, the factory owners, the farmers, the bankers, the brokers, the shopkeepers and their hangers-on, the landlords, divide amongst themselves in the shape of profits, interests, discounts, commissions, rent, etc." Is it at all true that wages and other outlay by the capitalist are replaced in the first few hours? Are not the large fortunes more usually the result of exploitation on a very large scale, a small daily profit being secured on each workman? And without the capitalist where would be the workshop, the plant, or the raw material? It would be far better if, in co-operative production, workmen would be their own capitalists; but surely the owner of the capital, without which the exploitation cannot take place, is entitled to some reward. If not, what becomes the first inducement to economy and enterprise? How is the capitalist to be persuaded to put his savings into fixed capital as factory and plant? Why should he, beforehand, purchase raw material on which labor may be employed, and the value of which raw material may diminish? Why should he subsist while so employed and take the risk of loss in exchanging the article produced, unless he is to have some profit? And why should not the farmer be sustained by the laborer if that farmer grows the food on which he subsists while working? Why should not the shopkeeper be rewarded for bringing ready to the laborer articles which would be otherwise difficult in the highest degree for the laborer to procure? If the laborer was obliged to procure his own raw material, to fashion it into an exchangeable commodity, and then had to find the person with whom he might exchange it, there are many to whom the raw material would be unaccessible, and more who would lose much of the profits of their labor in fruitless efforts to exchange. But for capital, fixed and circulating, there are many natural objects which would be utterly inaccessible to labor; many more which could only be reached and dealt with on a very limited scale. But for capital, the laborer would often be unable to exist until the object had an exchangeable value, or until some one was found ready with an equivalent article and desiring to exchange, and

the banker, the broker, the shopkeeper, though they are, unfortunately, sometimes too greedy for gain, may and do facilitate the progress of labor, and would not and could not do so without the incentive of profit.

It is too true that "wage" is often much too low, and that the conditions of labor are often oppressive, and to meet this I urge the workers in each trade to join the unions already existing, and to form new unions, so that the combined knowledge and protection of the general body of workers may be at the service of the weakest and most ignorant. It is for this that I obtained from the House of Commons last February the establishment of a labor statistical department under the Board of Trade, so that careful and reliable statistics of the value of labor and cost of living may be easily accessible to the poorest laborers. I would further urge the more thorough experiment in, and establishment of, co-operative productive societies in every branch of manufacture, so that the laborers, directly furnishing their own capital, as well as their own industry, may not only increase the profit result of labor to the laborer, but may also afford at least a reasonable indication of the possible profit realized by capitalists engaged in the same kind of industries. I would also increase wage (if not in amount, at any rate in its purchasing power) by diminishing the national and local expenditure, especially the national expenditure for warlike purposes, thus decreasing the cost of the necessities of life. I would, so far as Great Britain is concerned, try to shift the pressing burden of taxation from labor more on to land, and on to the very large inherited accumulations of wealth.

Socialism is dangerous in England, because it claims to be revolutionary in an age and in a country where the most extensive reforms have been peacefully effected during the past fifty years, and where the enormously wide extension of political power gives opportunity for the acceleration of the many reforms yet required. Socialism is dangerous here, for its present advocacy is hysterical, not practical. While I do not believe that Socialism can make the revolution its advocates menace, I do believe it may make disorder, turmoil, riot, and disturbance. Socialism, as advocated by the Social Democrats, is especially dangerous, because it furnishes excuse to reaction, and gives occasion for the possible restriction of the right of public meeting; a right which has so much aided political progress in this country during the present century. I

may, perhaps, be permitted to terminate this article by repeating, with very slight variation, the words I used on April 17th, 1884, at the close of my debate with Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the elected representative of the Social Democratic Federation, at which debate fully 5,000 persons were present.

You say you desire revolution—you say you are clamoring for it. These are the words you use. You say : “ We are urging it on ;” and I say it is the duty of every honest man to delay and prevent revolution. Revolution, if it must come, is terrible ; if it must come, it is horrible ; revolution means ruined homes, it leaves behind the memory of bloody deeds. I speak for the English people, which through generations of pain and toil gradually has climbed towards liberty, the liberty of which they have won some glimpses, and towards which they are climbing still. I speak for the people—who are ready to suffer much if they may redeem somewhat, who know that the errors of yesterday cannot be sponged away in a moment to-day, and who would try slowly, gradually, to mold, to modify, to build, but who refuse to destroy, and who declare that those who preach international Socialism, and talk vaguely about explosives, are playing into the hands of our enemies, and giving our enemies an excuse to coerce us.

C. BRADLAUGH.